**UPDATING THE WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT PLAN (WQMP)
FOR NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM LANDS IN CALIFORNIA**

**January 12, 2010 Stakeholders Group Meeting
Meeting Notes**

U.S. Forest Service (USFS) is fully engaged in this process, and will comply with water regulations. The updated WQMP will become a USFS handbook.

Stakeholder group is advisory and not required by law. There will be no formal response to comments submitted in December. This is not a rule-making process where formal responses are required by law. Staff will review comments and address them as part of the process of updating the WQMP. We can have a meeting to review the final product to determine if comments were adequately addressed, and if not, why.

The group will be reviewing various products at different stages of the development timeline. Comments received in December 2009 are now posted on the State Board website at:
http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/nps/comments_wqmp_forests.shtml.

Staff initially expected the stakeholder group to primarily provide independent technical advice on priority BMPs, effectiveness and feasibility. Group members are encouraged to consult with subject matter experts from their network. Individuals with different types of expertise can be invited to attend meetings.

A substantial portion of the group is primarily concerned with more programmatic and overarching portions of the WQMP, specifically on USFS accountability, transparency and adaptive management. The WQMP update will address these topics, including how impediments to implementation will be addressed. The group can provide input on where the process breaks down. The adaptive framework for addressing results of performance and effectiveness monitoring will be a public process. A subgroup will be formed a subgroup to address the adaptive management process. Anyone interested in participating in this group should send an email to gklee@waterboards.ca.gov or mchapel@fs.fed.us. The workgroup will report back at the March 23 stakeholder group meeting.

Due to time limitations, the current WQMP update and revision will focus on five priority topics which were identified by participants at the November 30, 2009 public workshop. These are:
- Timber management
- Rangeland management
- Forest roads
- Off-highway vehicles
- Fuels treatment/forest health projects

A chapter will be included to discuss future BMP topics, with a timeframe commitment for their development.

The topics will be developed as BMP modules. Effort will focus on the subset of practices that have been determined to have limited effectiveness and those with intrinsically higher risk.

Level of Specificity: The plan's level of specificity still needs to be determined. Certain group members noted the plan should be an overarching programmatic framework document with technical BMP specificity defined at the project level. It was suggested that roles and responsibilities should be defined at the program level.

Accountability and Transparency: There were several levels of discussion on the need for transparency and accountability: how will accountability be addressed, what procedures will be built in for more accountability. Adaptive management is critical. The feedback loop must be shortened at both the program and project scale; how will this be addressed given our resource limitations. There was a request for **Forest Service staff to provide stakeholder group with copy of internal guidance on water quality protection.** See Item 3 for additional notes on adaptive management.

Mercury and abandoned mines: Mine discharges are considered 'point source' so will not be dealt with as part of the plan. There is a separate program that deals with abandoned mines.

Forest lands outside forest boundaries: Private timber lands are currently subject to RB waivers or WDR, and regulatory actions can be taken when violations occur.

Remediation of Legacy Site: USFS plans an inventory step for forest system land base. There will be a prioritization step -- the inventory list will be prioritized annually between Forest Service and Water Boards -- taking into account the listing process and Forest Service priority watershed. Needed work will be scheduled for action.

*Monitoring***:** Monitoring will continue to be required, though the approach will change. Some of the proposed changes include: addition of an in-stream component with use of 'reference' streams, implementation checklist will be done for all BMPs on every project; a retrospective component is proposed where previously evaluated random sites will be re-visited.
- Are GIS layers available and can they be made available to the group?

Resource Limitations and Implementation: Resources are limited for implementation. We need to ensure that the WQMP (all components, including monitoring) can reasonably be implemented using the resources we currently have. More training is needed to ensure program implementation and continuing institutional memory. Promising more than can be delivered, given the known resource limitations sets the Forest Service up for failure.

Prioritizing 303d Listed Waters: The revised WQMP will need to take TMDL and listings into account. Prioritization will need to be done statewide to focus USFS efforts. Condition -- status, trend and value -- of beneficial use(s) should be accounted for. The following questions were also brought up:

- Will BMPs address how specific pollutant (e.g. sediment or temperature) will be affected?
- How will the issue of mixed ownership (i.e. multiple sources) and private land owners be addressed?
- How will ESA, habitat refugia, and cultural beneficial uses be addressed?

Regulatory Mechanism Questions: Many aspects of the regulatory mechanism (statewide waiver or WDR, conditions, etc) have yet to be determined. It is likely to address more than one activity, and it will say "implement the WQMP". It is not yet determined, and input is requested, how to appropriately address regional differences. Additional questions:

- What's the threshold for rescinding a waiver?
- What is current procedure for compliance with the plan? Regional Board inspections, Forest Service BMP Evaluation Program, Boards retain all regulatory authority –compliance process should be integrated into WQMP
- How specific will actions be?

The stakeholder group members can determine what products should come from the group. The possibility of a consensus report was suggested, with minority comments included. The group can choose how it wants to be organized, when and whether to form subgroups, and whether to send comments in as a group or individually. The group may choose to form subcommittees focusing on different aspects: e.g. BMP, general implementation procedures, accountability, etc.

The State Board's Office of Public Participation committed to facilitating the stakeholder meetings if requested by the stakeholder group. Future meetings will have agenda 'topics' sketched out in the preceding meeting, with background information the group needs identified.

The general process timeline for WQMP and CEQA development is posted at http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/nps/docs/wqmp_forests/process_timeline2.pdf
The following dates were proposed for future meetings:

Month and Year	Day	Description
January 2010	12th 13th	–first stakeholder group meeting –staff workgroup meeting
February 2010	28th	–first set of staff workgroup products: including first batch of BMPs to be reviewed
March 2010	23rd	–second stakeholder group meeting; 10 am; Rm 550
April 2010	Late April	–second set of staff workgroup products

May 2010	18th	–third stakeholder meeting
June 2010		
July 2010		–CEQA begins (initial study, scoping)
August 2010		
September 2010		
October 2010		
November 2010		–Draft final WQMP –Final review
December 2010		
Jan 2011		–Final WQMP –CEQA complete

The draft of the introductory portion of the WQMP document was reviewed in the afternoon. The document, with revisions from the January 12 meeting tracked is attached below. Water Board staff will email this introductory section to the stakeholder group so review can be continued. Comments should be sent to ForestPlan_Comments@waterboards.ca.gov by February 12.

The second stakeholders group meeting will be on March 23, starting at 10 am, in Room 550 of the CalEPA Building. The proposed agenda will include:
- Review of meeting notes from January 12
- Report back from 'Adaptive Management' subgroup
- Review of WQMP outline and suggestions for revisions
- Discussion of product(s) from staff workgroup –including first set of BMPs and list of forty BMPs and timeline for development and revision

Action Items:
- Water Board staff will send out the agenda for the second stakeholder meeting ahead of time and with meeting timeframes noted.
- Water Board staff will provide the staff workgroup's first set of products to stakeholder group for review February 28
- Water Board staff to provide stakeholder group with list of 40 BMPs
- Stakeholder group to review products from staff workgroup before March 23 stakeholder meeting
- Anyone who wishes to participate in the adaptive management/accountability subgroup should email Gaylon gklee@waterboards.ca.gov or Mike mchapel@fs.fed.us.
- Forest Service staff, if North Coast Regional Board 1 approves, will send out copy of RB 1's draft waiver to stakeholder group
- Forest Service staff to provide stakeholder group with copy of internal guidance on water quality protection
- Water Board staff to email WQMP introductory section with revisions from January 12 stakeholders meeting tracked

- Stakeholder group to submit comments to ForestLand_Comments@waterboards.ca.gov by February 12
- When available, Forest Service will provide a draft of the monitoring section for review.
- If available, the Forest Service can provide GIS shp files.